

1 INTRODUCTION

This is the Coon Rapids Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to provide guidance and information to those making development or investment decisions in the City of Coon Rapids.

The Plan contains those elements required by the Metropolitan Council and additional sections needed to help guide future development in the City. The Land Use and Transportation sections of the Plan designate how land will be used and the kind of transportation improvements that will be needed to provide for modest growth and redevelopment through the year 2030. Policies and directions for the City's water supply, sanitary and stormwater systems, parks and open space, solar access protection, housing, and wetlands protection are also included in the Plan.

Private property owners will be able to use the Plan to help them make decisions about improving their property. When the Coon Rapids City Council has to make decisions on land use issues or capital improvements, they will use this Plan to help guide those decisions. The City's Planning Commission, likewise, can use the Plan to help them advise the City Council on development issues. Finally, the Metropolitan Council, Anoka-Hennepin School District No. 11, Anoka County, and other state and local agencies will be able to coordinate their improvement projects with the directions set forth in this Plan.

The City's Comprehensive Plan provides direction for the development of long and short range implementation programs. The City of Coon Rapids periodically evaluates the impact of its implementation programs. The most recent effort was called *The 2030 Visioning Plan*. Citizens were asked to express their satisfaction with City development and services. The City used their input in revising this Comprehensive Plan and updating the City's implementation programs.

Introduction

COON RAPIDS – PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

The Past

The City's old-timers remember the way the City used to be: dirt roads, no electricity, a small and short-lived City created by the construction of a dam. Now they see a thriving City in an urban setting with an excellent quality of life.

Coon Rapids traces its founding as a separate government entity back to July 30, 1857 when Anoka Township was organized. The City retains these same boundaries with the exclusion of the City of Anoka which was incorporated as a separate City.

When the United States surveyed the area in 1847, it found a well traveled road running through Anoka County. The road was laid out in 1835 for military use and may be the oldest road in this part of the country. In 1843, trade was established by Norman W. Kittson from St. Paul to Pembina (now in North Dakota) in the Red River Valley and the road then became part of the famous Red River Ox Cart Trail. The trail closely followed the present East River Road-Coon Rapids Boulevard alignment.

Agriculture was the first industry in the Coon Creek area, with farms ranging in size from 90 to 600 acres. In 1881, Dr. D. C. Dunham organized the first brick yard which was located near the old City Hall site and was known as the Anoka Pressed Brick and Terra Cotta Company. It represented the first non-agricultural industry in Coon Rapids. A legacy left by that brick industry is still visible today and is known as the "Clay Hole" near Avocet Street and Coon Rapids Boulevard.

In the summer of 1898, the Great Northern Development Company proposed to build a dam below the Coon Creek Rapids with a power generating plant on the east side of the river. The actual construction did not start until 1912. Within one year, a small City had sprung up on the shores of the Mississippi River. Streets were laid out and roughly graded. The City's population grew to over one thousand with laborers and engineers working on the dam. The dam was built by the Mississippi Power Company and was operating by 1914. It was eventually acquired by the Three Rivers Park District and serves as Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park today.

With the coming of the dam, Anoka Township took on a new name - Coon Creek Rapids which over the years was shortened to Coon Rapids. In November of 1957, the village form of government was changed to the Council/Manager Plan. Two years later, in June of 1959, the Village of Coon Rapids became the City of Coon Rapids.

Since 1959, the population has grown from 14,000 to over 61,607 in the year 2000, making Coon Rapids the fifth largest suburb in the metropolitan area and the tenth largest City in the state of Minnesota.

The Present

According to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council, Coon Rapids is designated as a “Developed” community in contrast to Andover and Blaine which are still developing. That is not to say that there is not some new development in Coon Rapids. However, there is very little land to develop and the fast paced growth of the 1980s and 1990s is over in Coon Rapids.

Each chapter of this Comprehensive Plan for the City of Coon Rapids contains additional data about the City. However, at this point it is important to highlight some major population shifts that are beginning to occur in Coon Rapids. The table below reveals some of these changes.

TABLE 1-1: Key Coon Rapids Population and Employment Changes 1990 to 2000

| | 1990 | 2000 | % CHANGE |
|---|--------|--------|----------|
| Total Population | 52,978 | 61,607 | 16.3% |
| Persons per household | 3.01 | 2.71 | -10.0% |
| Married couples with children under 18 | 7,049 | 6,697 | -5.0% |
| Non-family households | 3,288 | 6,004 | 82.6% |
| Poverty Rates – families | 4.8% | 4.8% | 0.0% |
| Employment | 16,449 | 21,462 | 30.5% |
| Source: 2000 U.S. Census | | | |

The following paragraphs provide a more detailed description of what is happening to the age of the City’s population.

Fewer families with children - One of the most significant changes was the 5% decrease in the number of married couples with children under 18 between 1990 and 2000. The average family size dropped 10%. (This drop is likely to become a trend as the City ages.) During the same period, there was also an 82% increase in non-family households. These two changes indicate that the population is aging and that has implications for the schools, recreation facilities, transportation, housing types, and housing maintenance.

Migration - Two factors affect population change in a community—natural change (births minus deaths) and people moving in and out of the community (migration). Table 1-2 compares Coon Rapids’ 1990 and 2000 predicted and actual populations. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the City had 52,978 residents in 1990. Based on standard birth and survival rates, the City’s population would have naturally increased to 58,308 by 2000, or 10.1%. Census data, however, showed an actual population of 61,607 in 2000, or a 16.3% increase over the 1990 level. The difference between the predicted and actual populations, 3,299, is a result of net migration into the City because of the availability of more housing units. This suggests that Coon Rapids experienced a net migration rate of 5.7% for the decade.

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TABLE 1-2: Predicted and Actual Population Change, Coon Rapids

| | 1990 | 2000 | Change | % Change |
|--|--------|--------|--------|----------|
| Predicted Population (based on survival and birth rates) | 52,978 | 58,308 | 5,330 | 10.1% |
| Actual Population | 52,978 | 61,607 | 8,629 | 16.3% |
| Predicted Male Population | 26,180 | 28,817 | 2,637 | 10.1% |
| Actual Male Population | 26,180 | 29,981 | 3,801 | 14.5% |
| Predicted Female Population | 26,798 | 29,491 | 2,693 | 10.1% |
| Actual Female Population | 26,798 | 31,626 | 4,828 | 18.0% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The difference between the actual and predicted population for 2000 varies greatly by age group. Table 1-3 displays this information, which indicates that individuals in certain age ranges are more likely to migrate to Coon Rapids than others. Actual numbers of adults between ages 25 and 39 and children under age 10 were well above expected levels, suggesting that the City was a popular destination for young families. Coon Rapids experienced out-migration of college-age young adults, as well as adults between ages 40 and 64. The City experienced in-migration of adults age 70 and over during the 1990s, possibly attributed to its range of senior housing options.

TABLE 1-3: Predicted and Actual Age Cohort Change, Coon Rapids

| Age Group | 1990 Actual | 2000 Predicted | 2000 Actual | Net Migration (Actual minus Predicted) | % Net Migration (Actual/Predicted) |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Under 5 | 4,904 | 3,614 | 4,628 | 1,014 | 28.1% |
| 5-9 | 4,975 | 4,009 | 5,127 | 1,118 | 27.9% |
| 10-14 | 4,410 | 4,892 | 4,992 | 100 | 2.0% |
| 15-19 | 4,032 | 4,960 | 4,622 | (338) | -6.8% |
| 20-24 | 3,652 | 4,382 | 3,830 | (552) | -12.6% |
| 25-29 | 5,260 | 3,997 | 4,409 | 412 | 10.3% |
| 30-34 | 5,586 | 3,619 | 4,958 | 1,339 | 37.0% |
| 35-39 | 4,691 | 5,209 | 5,801 | 592 | 11.4% |
| 40-44 | 4,339 | 5,517 | 5,353 | (164) | -3.0% |
| 45-49 | 3,235 | 4,608 | 4,430 | (178) | -3.9% |
| 50-54 | 2,354 | 4,216 | 3,934 | (282) | -6.7% |
| 55-59 | 1,830 | 3,080 | 2,935 | (145) | -4.7% |
| 60-64 | 1,247 | 2,174 | 2,092 | (82) | -3.8% |
| 65-69 | 883 | 1,604 | 1,637 | 33 | 2.1% |
| 70-74 | 604 | 1,017 | 1,168 | 151 | 14.9% |
| 75-80 | 415 | 647 | 823 | 176 | 27.2% |
| 80-84 | 264 | 383 | 511 | 128 | 33.4% |
| 85+ | 297 | 380 | 357 | (23) | -6.0% |
| Total | 52,978 | 58,308 | 61,607 | 3,299 | 5.7% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The graph below shows the gain or loss of population in each age cohort shown in Table 1-3 above.

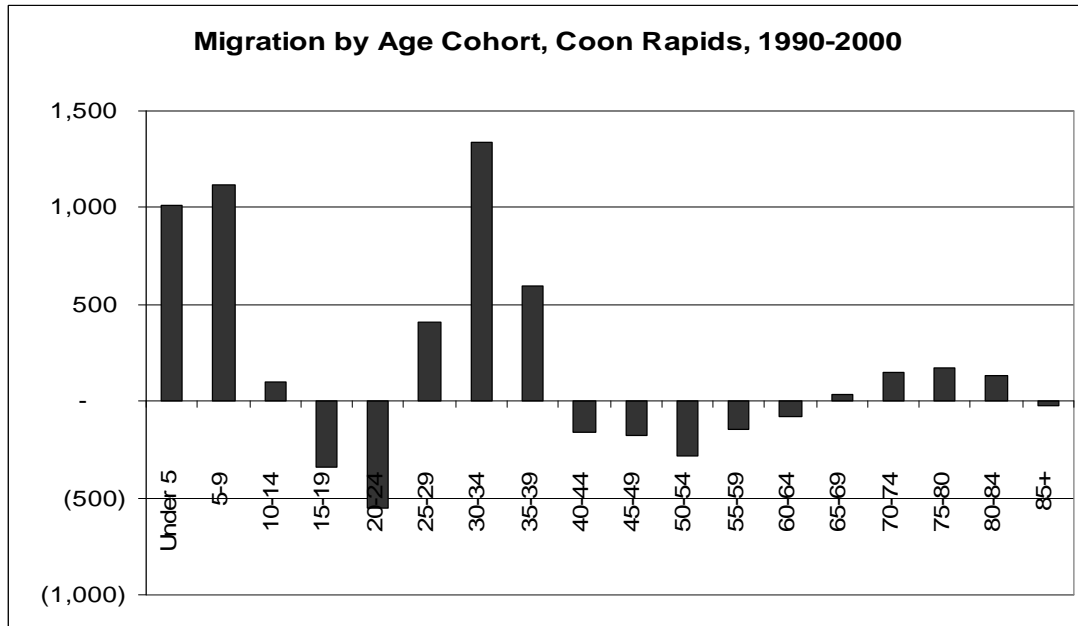


Table 1-4 illustrates changes in Coon Rapids' population by age group as a percent of the total population. While the City experienced substantial in-migration of young adults between ages 25 and 34, the proportion of residents in these age groups actually declined during the 1990s. The percentage of children in the City generally remained steady during the decade. Adults between ages 40 and 64 made up an increasing share of the total population between 1990 and 2000. This trend is largely attributed to the aging of the "baby boom" generation, since these cohorts experienced out-migration from the City during the 1990s.

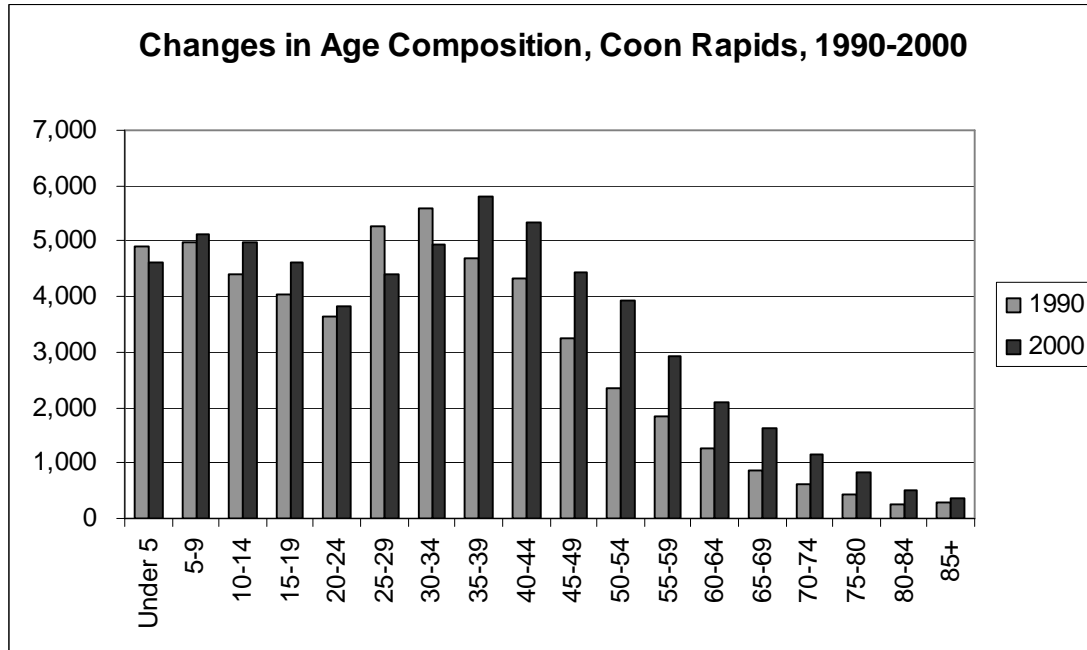
TABLE 1-4: Age Composition as Percent of Total Population, Coon Rapids

| Age Group | 1990 Population | 2000 Population | Change 1990-2000 | % of Total 1990 | % of Total 2000 |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Under 5 | 4,904 | 4,628 | (276) | 9% | 8% |
| 5-9 | 4,975 | 5,127 | 152 | 9% | 8% |
| 10-14 | 4,410 | 4,992 | 582 | 8% | 8% |
| 15-19 | 4,032 | 4,622 | 590 | 7% | 8% |
| 20-24 | 3,652 | 3,830 | 178 | 7% | 6% |
| 25-29 | 5,260 | 4,409 | (851) | 10% | 7% |
| 30-34 | 5,586 | 4,958 | (628) | 10% | 8% |
| 35-39 | 4,691 | 5,801 | 1,110 | 9% | 9% |
| 40-44 | 4,339 | 5,353 | 1,014 | 8% | 9% |
| 45-49 | 3,235 | 4,430 | 1,195 | 6% | 7% |
| 50-54 | 2,354 | 3,934 | 1,580 | 4% | 6% |
| 55-59 | 1,830 | 2,935 | 1,105 | 3% | 5% |
| 60-64 | 1,247 | 2,092 | 845 | 2% | 3% |
| 65-69 | 883 | 1,637 | 754 | 2% | 3% |
| 70-74 | 604 | 1,168 | 564 | 1% | 2% |
| 75-80 | 415 | 823 | 408 | 1% | 1% |
| 80-84 | 264 | 511 | 247 | 0% | 1% |
| 85+ | 297 | 357 | 60 | 1% | 1% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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The graph below shows the numbers from the prior table above. This is another way of showing how the City's population is aging. The graph reveals that all of the cohorts (age groups) beyond the age of 34 increased in the 1990s.



The Future

The Metropolitan Council has provided estimates for population, household, and employment for the years 2010, 2020, and 2030. They are shown below.

Table 1-5: Metropolitan Council Forecasts

| | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 | 2030 |
|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Population | 61,607 | 65,700 | 66,000 | 65,000 |
| Households | 22,578 | 25,600 | 26,500 | 27,000 |
| Employment | 21,462 | 24,200 | 26,000 | 27,800 |

Employment

The City's industrial parks and commercial areas will fill in and intensify resulting in about 6,500 additional jobs between 2000 and 2030.

Households

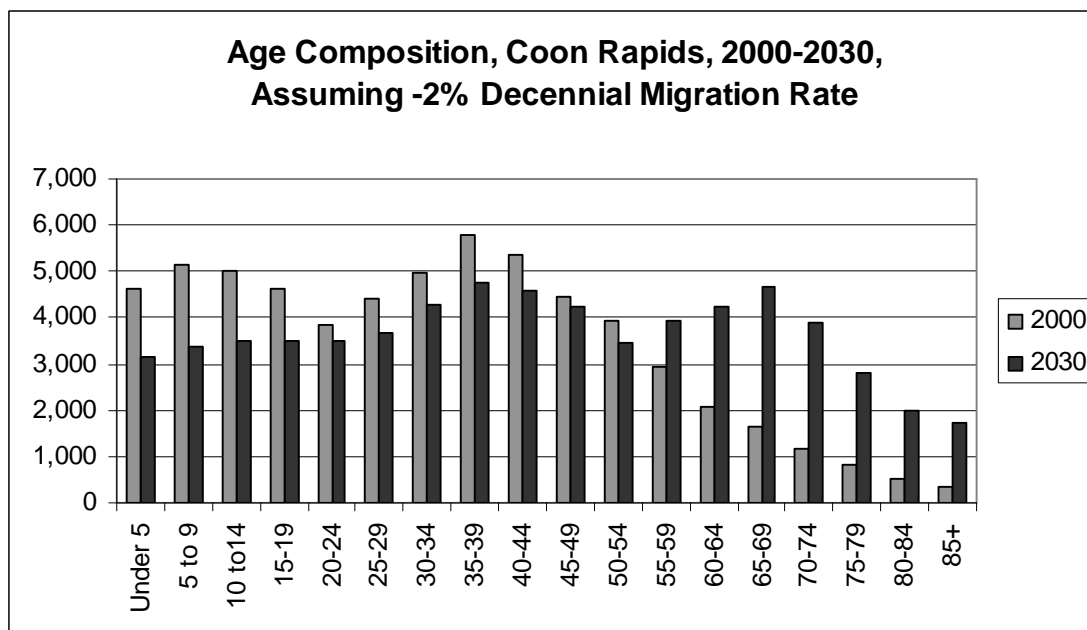
Households are projected to continue to grow through 2030 as additional housing units are constructed.

Population

Population is forecast to increase by about 4,400 people between 2000 and 2020 before falling back 500 people to 65,000 by 2030.

An Aging Population

Whereas, there might be some speculation about the Metropolitan Council's population forecast, there is no doubt that the age structure is going to change substantially. Coon Rapids will become an increasingly older community. The graph below shows the substantial increase in age groups 55 and older and a decrease in all age groups under age 55.



The graph above is based on the rationale below.

Both natural changes (births minus deaths) in the City's population and migration in and out of the community will affect the age of the population. During the 1990s, Coon Rapids experienced a 16.3% population increase, which corresponds to a 5.7% migration rate. Because the City now has little vacant land and all new housing will occur as redevelopment, it is unlikely that Coon Rapids will continue to experience the level of in-migration it did during the 1990s. Based on the City's 2000 age distribution, if the population aged in place, birth and death rates remain constant, and the City experienced no in- or out-migration, Coon Rapids would have a population of about 69,000 in 2030. Because the City's natural population increase would yield several thousand new residents, it is almost inevitable that Coon Rapids will experience net out-migration of residents in the coming decades based on its limited capacity for additional housing units.

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The Metropolitan Council's projection of 65,000 residents by 2030 assumes about a -2% migration rate per decade.

Table 1-6 compares the City's age composition in 2000 to its projected 2030 age composition, assuming a -2% decennial migration rate for each age cohort. This analysis suggests a substantial decline in the number of children and young adults in the City and a substantial increase in the number of older adults. While it is difficult to project a community's population characteristics in such detail, these data nonetheless indicate a significant aging of the overall population. These changes will have a major impact on the City's housing stock, service delivery, and transportation needs.

TABLE 1-6: Changes in Age Composition, -2% Decennial Migration

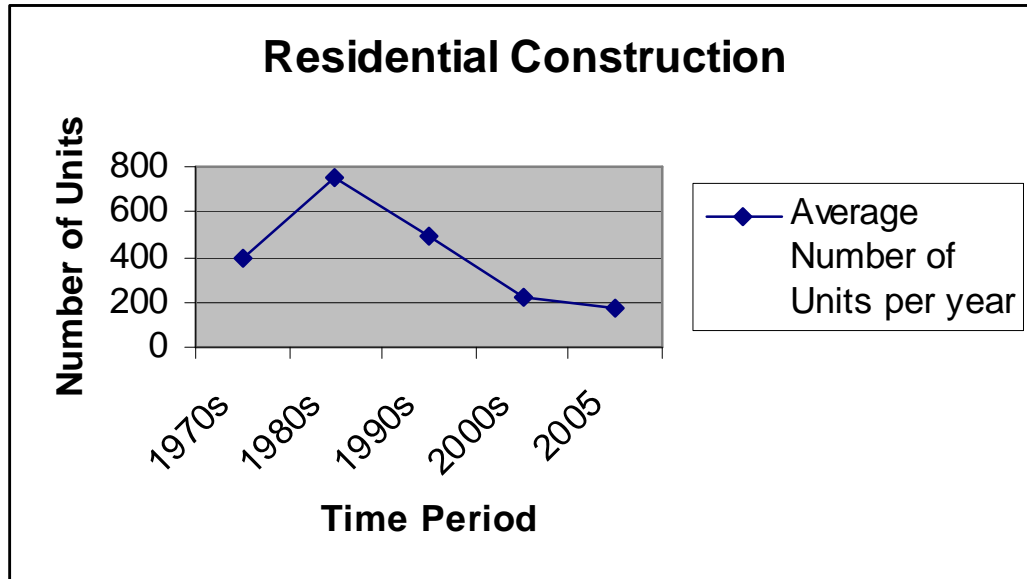
| | 2000 Actual | 2030 Predicted | Change 2000-2030 | % of Total 2000 | % of Total 2030 |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Under 5 | 4,628 | 3,150 | (1,478) | 8% | 5% |
| 5 to 9 | 5,127 | 3,375 | (1,752) | 8% | 5% |
| 10 to 14 | 4,992 | 3,496 | (1,496) | 8% | 5% |
| 15-19 | 4,622 | 3,483 | (1,139) | 8% | 5% |
| 20-24 | 3,830 | 3,487 | (343) | 6% | 5% |
| 25-29 | 4,409 | 3,652 | (757) | 7% | 6% |
| 30-34 | 4,958 | 4,292 | (666) | 8% | 7% |
| 35-39 | 5,801 | 4,741 | (1,060) | 9% | 7% |
| 40-44 | 5,353 | 4,595 | (758) | 9% | 7% |
| 45-49 | 4,430 | 4,226 | (204) | 7% | 6% |
| 50-54 | 3,934 | 3,468 | (466) | 6% | 5% |
| 55-59 | 2,935 | 3,913 | 978 | 5% | 6% |
| 60-64 | 2,092 | 4,248 | 2,156 | 3% | 7% |
| 65-69 | 1,637 | 4,672 | 3,035 | 3% | 7% |
| 70-74 | 1,168 | 3,908 | 2,740 | 2% | 6% |
| 75-79 | 823 | 2,793 | 1,970 | 1% | 4% |
| 80-84 | 511 | 1,977 | 1,466 | 1% | 3% |
| 85+ | 357 | 1,734 | 1,377 | 1% | 3% |
| Total | 61,607 | 65,210 | 3,603 | 100% | 100% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; City of Coon Rapids

Decreased Construction Activity

As this Plan was developed in 2007 and 2008, one of the last large parcels of undeveloped land in the City was being converted from sod fields to a housing subdivision. After this subdivision is developed at University Avenue and Main Street, it will be a struggle to develop housing for new families with children and temper the trend toward fewer married couples with children under 18. The City will then age even more rapidly unless new multi-family housing opportunities, including townhouses and detached townhouses, can be provided to lure seniors and empty nesters out of their homes.

The following graph shows the decline in residential construction activity in the City since the 1970s.



The City will likely have to be a partner in providing those opportunities for new housing development. Unless developments comparable in size to the Riverwalk (Egret Boulevard and Coon Rapids Boulevard) public/private cooperative experience is repeated in several other locations, it will be difficult to provide enough housing units to sustain a population of around 65,000 people as projected by the Metropolitan Council.

Aging Housing Supply

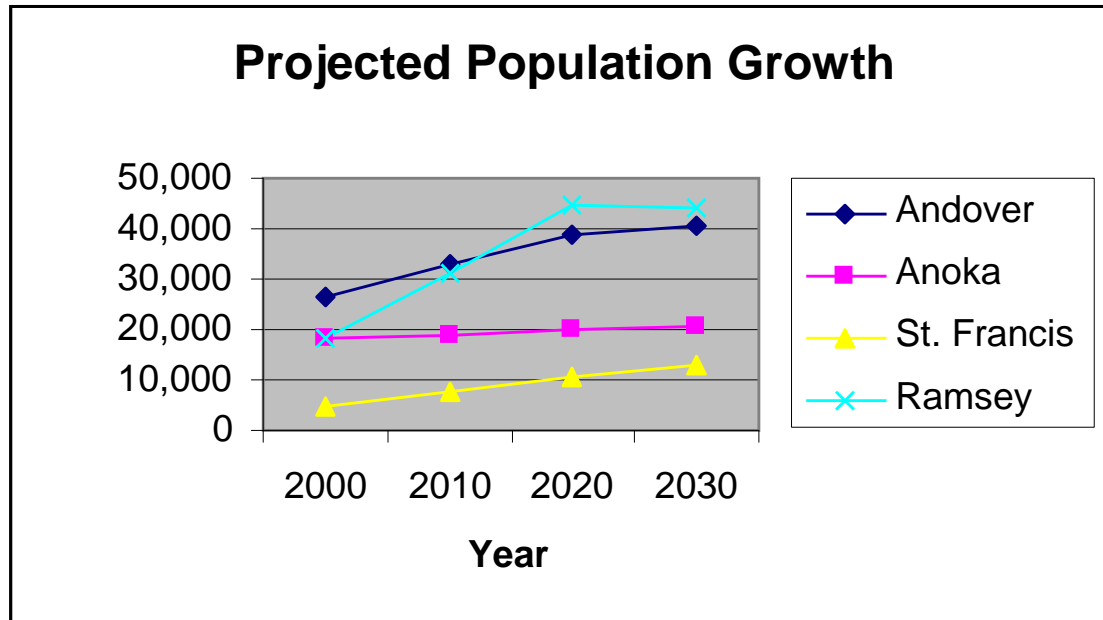
Maintaining the City's housing stock will be a major challenge. In the year 2000, 29% of the housing supply was at least 30 years old. By the year 2030, it is projected that 84% of the housing will be at least 30 years old. Housing investment in maintenance must increase substantially when homes get to be 30 or more years of age. It is assumed that rising housing prices will cause many to invest in their homes rather than move. However, an aging population, with many people on fixed incomes, will find it difficult to make the investment needed to maintain homes.

Growth of "Upstream" Communities

Those communities that will contribute significant traffic to the Coon Rapids street network are referred to as upstream communities. Metropolitan Council forecasts that the population in the upstream communities of Ramsey, Andover, St. Francis, and Anoka will increase from 68,000 in the year 2000 to 118,000 by 2030. This will result in substantially more traffic through Coon Rapids on Highway 10 and around the greater Riverdale shopping area.

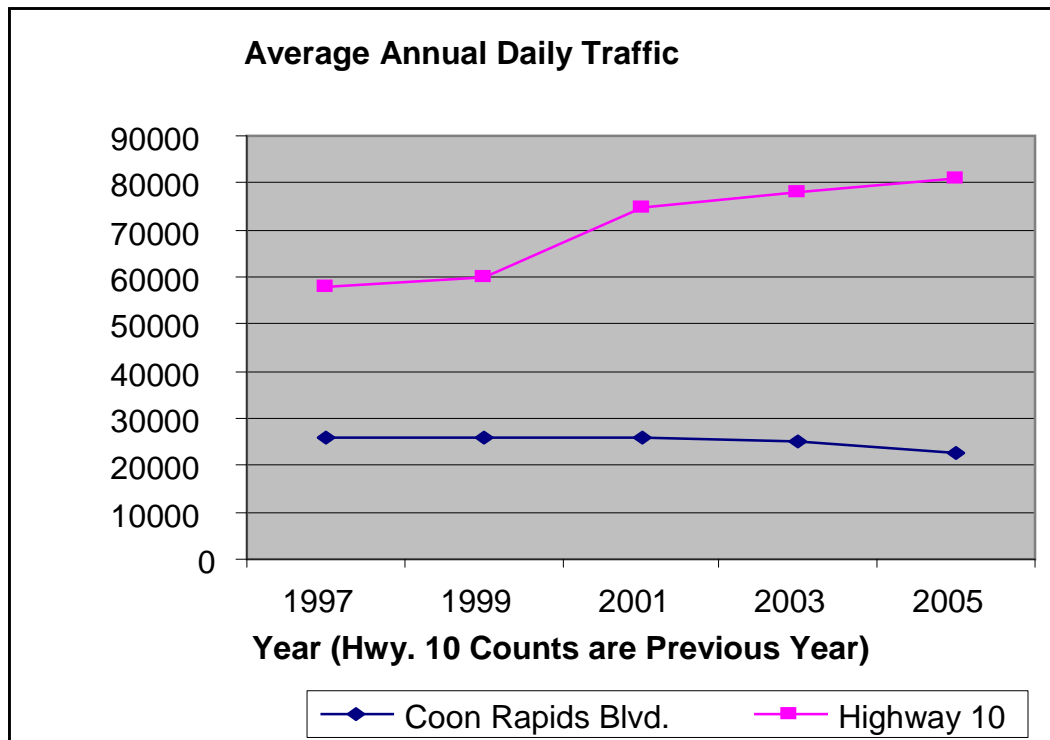
The following graph shows the projected growth of the upstream communities.

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Regional Transportation Plan

The graph below shows a substantial increase in traffic on Highway 10 while Coon Rapids Boulevard has declined slightly from 1997 to 2005.



Coon Rapids believes that Highway 10 is reaching capacity. Unfortunately, improvements to Highway 10 and Main Street (County Road 14) are not programmed before 2030 with the exception of the new interchange at Highway 10 and Hanson Boulevard. This will likely mean growing congestion and inconvenience on both roadways and diversion of traffic to Coon Rapids Boulevard and other City streets such as Foley Boulevard, Egret Boulevard, Hanson Boulevard, Robinson Drive, Northdale Boulevard, and Round Lake Boulevard.

Rising Energy Costs

Proximity to jobs within reasonable driving or transit distance will be very important to commuters as energy costs continue to rise over the next several years. Commuters will likely pay a premium for housing closer to the center of the metropolitan area. Coon Rapids should benefit from rising property values because it is within the region's transit service area. The Northstar Commuter Rail line could have a very positive effect on property values and downtown access. (Coon Rapids provides the sixth highest number of downtown Minneapolis workers of all the metropolitan area communities.)

Developments in Surrounding Communities

Significant new developments in Blaine and Brooklyn Park will likely make Coon Rapids neighborhoods more desirable. The Brooklyn Park Target campus will provide a very large number of jobs. It will be relatively easy and cost effective for Coon Rapids residents to get to those jobs. Blaine's new retail developments will provide new shopping opportunities for Coon Rapids' east side residents. The downside of the Blaine developments is that they are making existing commercial developments in eastern Coon Rapids and along the east side of University Avenue obsolete. This trend will present a challenge to the City to provide commercial services close to an aging population.

Introduction

THE COON RAPIDS VISION OF THE FUTURE

Coon Rapids will be a community with a stable population of about 65,000 people. It will contend successfully with significant challenges of traffic, aging properties, aging City infrastructure, and environmental protection.

Housing - The City will have well-maintained neighborhoods with a variety of housing types for all age groups. Townhouses, senior apartments, and common interest communities (detached homes with common areas maintained by a homeowners association) will be available in all parts of town so that empty nesters can move out of their existing homes, if they choose to do so, and thereby make room for families with children.

Schools – There will be enough new multi-family housing designed for senior citizens who will then sell their homes and make them available to families with children. The family population will then be stabilized so that the Anoka Hennepin School District No. 11 will be able to retain the elementary schools in the City and the variety of class offerings in the City's secondary schools.

Jobs - Job opportunities will be provided in a variety of locations but especially in the Evergreen Industrial Park, Northdale Industrial Area, and in the greater Riverdale area.

Traffic - Traffic will increase substantially on Highway 10 as Ramsey, Elk River, Andover, and St. Francis grow. Additional lanes will be added to Highway 10 and interchanges redesigned to move traffic through the City. A new Mississippi River crossing between Ramsey and Dayton will also relieve some congestion in Coon Rapids. A commuting alternative and some traffic relief will be provided by the operation of the Northstar Commuter Rail line. The Northstar stations at Riverdale and Foley Boulevard will be surrounded by additional multi-family housing units and hundreds of parking spaces for Northstar commuters.

Coon Rapids Boulevard - Coon Rapids Boulevard will change from a three-mile long strip of unevenly spaced and unrelated businesses to a street that is much more residential in character. Most of the new uses will be higher density townhouse and apartment development that will, hopefully, increase mass transit ridership on Coon Rapids Boulevard. Traffic calming measures will be taken along Coon Rapids Boulevard so that speeds and noise are reduced in a way that makes the street more compatible with new residential uses.

Natural Areas - Coon Rapids' large wetland and natural areas will be preserved through a combination of City, state, and watershed district regulations. New trails will be sensitively constructed to allow residents and visitors to enjoy the open space legacy of Coon Creek, the Mississippi River, and the City's many wetlands. The trail system will connect neighborhoods to each other and to the City's transit system.

The Plan – Moving Toward the Vision

The Coon Rapids Comprehensive Plan includes the following chapters

- Chapter 2 Land Use – Page 2-1
- Chapter 3 Transportation – Page 3-1
- Chapter 4 Housing – Page 4-1
- Chapter 5 Water Resources – Page 5-1
- Chapter 6 Parks and Open Space – Page 6-1
- Chapter 7 Community Facilities – Page 7-1